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U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Washington, D.C. 20515

NINETY-SECOND CONGRESS

F. EDWARD HEBERT, CHAIRMAN

October 21, 1971

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Honorable Thaddeus J. Dulski
Chairman
Post Office and Civil Service Committee
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I understand that your Committee now has under consideration H. R. 11150, a bill "To protect civilian employees of the executive branch of the United States Government in the enjoyment of their constitutional rights, to prevent unwarranted governmental invasions of their privacy, and for other purposes."

I was gratified to learn that certain Federal agencies under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services including the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency are among the sensitive Federal agencies which have been specifically exempted from application of the provisions of the bill. This action, as recommended by your Subcommittee, is sound. I therefore trust that this particular provision in the bill will remain unchanged.

As you know, the administration of the Central Intelligence Agency is governed by the National Security Act of 1947 and the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949. This legislation imposes on the Director of Central Intelligence responsibility "... for protecting intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure. ..." and provides that "In the interests of the security of the foreign intelligence activities of the United States ... the Agency shall be exempted from the provisions ... of any ... law which require(s) the publication or disclosure of the organization, functions, names, official titles, salaries, or numbers of personnel employed by the Agency ...".

Honorable Thaddeus J. Dulski

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The reasons for imposing this responsibility on the Director of Central Intelligence, and for granting him this exemption, I believe are evident. It is a well-established fact that ever-alert hostile intelligence services assign the highest priority to identifying and exploiting personal vulnerabilities of our own intelligence officers. This is not only because of their access to the most sensitive kinds of information, but also because their work frequently takes them to lonely and hostile areas where they are exposed to a variety of pressures and provocations.

There are two main defenses against these hazards. First, it is essential that intelligence personnel receive the most thorough screening and assessment to ensure the selection of the right man for the job. Second, since good security depends largely on the loyalty and morale of its employees, the Agency's personnel policies must be carried out with the utmost regard for the personal dignity and privacy of the individual. I am convinced that the Agency management fully appreciates this, realizing that it could not carry out its vital mission, or preserve the security of its sensitive activities, if the fairness and reasonableness of its personnel policies did not have the confidence of its employees. Nevertheless, the authority of the Director over the Agency's personnel policies, to be commensurate with his responsibilities, must be undiluted.

The considerations relating to the Central Intelligence Agency apply with equal force and effect to the National Security Agency as well as certain other agencies within the Department of Defense.

I would appreciate very much if the views I have expressed in this letter are made available to the members of your Committee at the time they consider the Subcommittee's recommendation on H. R. 11150.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely,

F. Edw. Hebert
Chairman

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